

## [Dr. William W. Wood]

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[Folklore?]-White Pioneer Life History Folklore

Miss Effie Cowan, PW

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Interview with Dr William W. Wood, White Pioneer, Waco, Texas.

"I was born in Coosa County Alabama, October 7th, 1862. My father was r Dr Eason B. Wood, a practicing physician and slave owner and plantation operator in Alabama. My mother was Miss Sarah Barrett, a daughter of James Barrett and wife. James Barrett died and my grandmother came to Texas with her sons Frank, Reneau and Thomas. Mother died in 1899, at the age of fifty years and father passed away in December of 1907. Their children were, myself, John H. Dixie, a teacher, and Eugene. William, John, Dixie and Eugene

"My father prepared for his medical profession in Jefferson Medical College, in Philadelphia, graduating in 1856. He practiced in Coosa County Alabama, only abandoning his profession when he retired to his farm because of ill health, after coming

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to Texas. During the war between the states he served in the Eastern Department of the Confederacy as Captain, was captured and sent a prisoner to Johnson's Island, Lake Erie. He was interested in education and belonged to the Baptist church, of which he was an active member.

"I was a small boy when we left Alabama but I can remember crossing the Mississippi river at Vicksburg, and as we reached the opposite side , who should be standing there but one of our former slaves, on seeing us he cried out "Hello Massa, dis de fust time I is see any of you'ns sice since I lef' fur de war wid Marse Henry, I wuz wid Mars Henry [?] when de Yankee's kill him, an' I see him put away, jes' as I promise him I would". C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 "When we left Alabama we came by wagon train driving oxen and mules, there were twenty -five families in the train. We reached the Trinity river in about sixty days after crossing the [?] Mississipp . The whole country was under water and we had to wait for the water to recede before we could cross and made camp where we remained for about two weeks. Then we drove into Athens Texas, where we lived on a rented farm , near - by for two years. "My father practiced medicine here with a Dr Gardner and my mother secured the country school and taught for a time.

"About this time my [?] father decided to leave the timber country and moved to Hill county and bought a farm of two hundred acres , si six miles east of Mount Calm Texas. We children attended the school at Hubbard which was also near us , until we were old enough to attend college. Our father's brother-in-law , Mr Barrett , also bought two hundred acres and lived near us.

"While we lived in the Navasota bottom Ben Wallace homesteaded land, and no better man ever lived and had such a noble wife, we called her Aunt Mary Jane. Now they are all gone, but we cherish their memory, the children, also. While living there and making a crop the men would go went to the prairie and built three log houses, split rails and improved their homes, on the prairie

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"I can remember how it began to snow while we were in camp before our homes were built, and how one of the oxen froze to death in the night, and the next day when we went back to our home in the bottom we rigged up sleds and teams and sharpened our knives ready to skin dead cattle, we dressed them for a week [?] skinned them and sold the hides for a good / price and 3 it enabled me to purchase rations and supplies which were so much needed, Turkeys were wild but were plentiful everywhere. Grandmother Barrett's grandmother took a string and fastened it to a crib door where she could see it, and when forty six wild turkeys went into the crib for feed she closed the door on them and we had plenty of trukeys to eat for some time.

I recall my Uncle building a turkey pen of rails with a tunnel leading into it, he baited the roads leading to the pen and caught a pen full, I can remember how, in his haste he hurried into the trench and the turkeys gave him quite a lash lashing . When we went back to work on the prairie houses we left a servant girl to sprout the ground ready for planting, she heard the dogs barking at something, and they had a deer cornered in the creek bed. She took the wooden rake and helped the dogs to kill the deer. This goes to show that we reached Texas in time for the wild turkeys and deer.

"Another incident of my youth which impressed me was my father sending me to Waco to purchase a cog for our sorghum mill. He had given me a pony and I rode him over to Waco ( a good ride ) . The foundry was located on the bank of the Brazos river and I spent the night in a hotel on Franklin street, I can remember how a live oak tree grew up thro' the porch of the hotel, and have often wondered what became of this place. When I went back home I tied the cog to the saddle, and the ion motion of the horse ruined the cog as well as blistering the horse's shoulder.

"In 1879 father sent mother and myself down to Waco to place me in Baylor University, paying my tuition with a load of bacon we took with us. / I went home for the holidays, so happy with so, much to tell. when When I returned the 4 first of January , I rode horseback to Waco and on arriving I turned the horse loose with a note pinned to the saddle saying"

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Please let this horse with saddle pass to farm of r Dr E. B. Wood unmolested". Three weeks later father came down and said the horse had not returned and on making inquiry we found him in East Waco, just as he had left.

"In the summer father sent me to Louisiana with horses we had bought in Mexico, we had 117 head. We went down Jacksons trail and came to a house where we camped that night, I had some corn for the horses, and found a man just returnin returning from a drive with a big buck. I traded the corn for a whole ham of the buck, carried this to camp and with a long pole passed 'thro' the ham-string, I barbecued it and today I can say it was [among?] the best barbecue I ever ate.

"We cooked at the camp and made clothes out of wagon sheets that served us well, but they sometimes became so full of grease and dust they almost stood on end, ( after being removed. ) I recall the night after the heavy snow I mentioned , when the cattle froze. I could not find my socks and shoes while trying to make the fire so had to proceed to a neighbors, by name of Bob Fane , barefooted. When we returned hom home Mrs Fane made me wear her stockings and shoes, after giving us a lovely dinner. Long after-ward when I was practicing medicine I often reminded her of her kindness in lending me her foot wear. This also reminds me of the fate of our yoke of oxen which brought us from Alabama. We would hobble them at night together so they could not stray far from camp. One morning / when we found 5 them they were both dead from eating frozen mustard; Oh, how sad we were and lonely with Buck and Bill gone, " what shall we do !" was our cry. Father made the best of our hard luck and said "we will skin them and buy coffee," which we did , and things took a turn for the better.

Another time my father was out of tobacco, it was 25 miles to the nearest market, Mexia, I had instruction to start to town but if I met any one who had any tobacco to ask for some, I met another old-timer and ighbor neighbor Bill Powell, and secured an abundant supply and thus thro' the neighborly kindness was saved the trip.

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"Time passed on and I completed my course at Baylor University at Waco, Texas, taught, a year , then attended my fathers Alma-Mater, the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and completed my course there in 1887. I graduated from Baylor in 1885. Afterwards took post / graduate work in the New york York Polyclinic, in the New Orleans Polyclinic and two courses in the Chicago Institute of that class.

"In January of 1910 our firm of Wood and Wood purchased the property of the Hubbard Hot Well and Sanitarium, which represented the investment of thirty-five thousand dollars, and at the time was one of the leading health resorts of the state. As all of the medical profession , have, I have stored in my memory many amusing incidents connected with my profession. One of the most impressive incidents was when I first commenced the practice of medicine and meeting an older doctor in consultation, 6 a man whom I loved honored and respected. After discussing the case before us he / said "I would give him this and that " , remedies for the particular case, to which I consented; then I suggested something else to meet another symptom. The old doctor said "No, we have given him enough lets give him a chance to get well".

"I recall another instance which impressed me in one of my patients. He had a malignant type of trouble and I told him so , also that it was unnecessary for me to call every day, but he insisted and his good wife always had the best of eats, such s as fritters, chicken, steak, pease and cakes , with something hot to drink. The minute she entered with a platter of these eatables he would begin , "Mollie I am a very sick man your uantity quantity takes my appetite" Then I would try to go and he would say "I do love to see you come and / hate to see you go", but I thought it time to go [!?] ne One day he said "Bring your bill tomorrow, I want to see you paid before the triggers fall, you know I have some sons-in - law ! "I knew them and decided to present my bill as requested. Once before he insisted on paying me with twenty-seven pigs and said "You know that a man with twenty-seven pigs and nothing to feed them is broke, and convinced me it was my duty to accept the pigs!

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"I married on the 4th / of April 1888, Miss Nina Lynn Jameson , a daughter of Dr James Jameson who came to Texas from Georgia. We lived at Hubbard, where I practiced medicine with my father until our children were ready to enter college. It was with a feeling of sadness that we left this little town of good people which had been our home for so long. 7 "Our children are Nina Lynn Wood Friley (deceased). She died of / Influenza at College Stat Station , Bryan, Texas in 1918. Her husband was Chas. E. Friley, who is now President of Iowa State University at Ames Iowa. Our other daughter was Hallie Byrd who died at the age of four years. My sons are William Maxwell who is in the live-stock business at Gallup New Mexico. James Kenneth Wood and family of two children, Kenneth and Lydia Lynn, live at Corsicana, he is in the investment business. David Eason Wood and wife Cecil live at hiro Shiro and both are teachers. Eugene Carroll Wood lives in Seattle Washington and is a lawyer. Walter Putnam Wood lives in Waco and is in the investment business.

"In 1904 to lessen my expenses and place my children in Baylor University I sold out my Sanitarium and other holdings at Hubbard and moved to Waco, Texas, where I am now living. When the World war included our Country and the army camp and base hospital were located at Waco, there were around fifty thousand soldiers at one time. During the winter the influenza epedemic was raging and civilians and soldiers alike were dying like sheep. We held a medical convention and discussed what steps could be taken to reduce the death rate. We had a regime prescribed by one of the army men, but it did not stop the epedemic.

"At the meeting I could not keep silent and arose and sd said "It is not customary to digress from the visiting doctors prescribed treatment, but if I am allowed the privilege of speaking, if you will open the doors and windows and give them plenty of fresh air, I will be responsible for 8 the reduction of the death rate". There were cries from all over the house of "Amen, Amen". The suggestion was adopted and after the treatment was changed in favor of fresh air, the death rate began to subside.

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"In the year 1914 I attended the American Surgical Convention which met in London, my wife accompanying me. We boarded the Celtic, leaving New York and arrived at Cherbourg France our first stop. I had a peculiar experience on the vessel. My friends had filled my valise with good cigars to enjoy on the trip . Before arriving in France e we were advised that we should pass our smokes around to our friends on the boat because the duty on them was so great that it would be prohibitive to smoke American tobacco abroad. I did not like the European tobacco's so I quit smoking and have not done s so since.

"When we arrived in Paris the mail carrier at our hotel brought our mail and said, "I bring you geetings from home, I hope it is good news". We later learned that this was the only English that he could speak. After seeing France we went to Vienna, and in crossing the Danube river, a man with a megaphone called / out to us to, "Look ook to our left and see the Sarcophaygi that tommorrow would contain the remains of Ferdinand and Sophie who were murdered at Sarijari ". And and this is said to be the cause of the world war.

"The next day we proceeded to Vienna on our way to the hotel after driving for some time in a taxi, I inquired of the driver as to the extent of the trip. He advised me that he was making a circuitous route of fifteen miles to avoid contacting the Royal Funeral, to be held at midnight, I told him not 9 to carry us to the hotel but let us see the funeral. He drove us on and put us out just in front of the procession / which contained two hearses, one for Ferdinand and the other for Sophie, followed by Frances Joseph, the Emperor.

"This was the first time we realized that war was impending, for Francis Joseph constantly remarked to his subjects on either side, "I was in hopes that I would be spared seeing my people thrown into another war". The city was in total darkness, as was the custom at Royal funerals. Only long torches were carried by the footmen who were guarding the two hearses. We Americans were restless and of course began to whisper, but were hushed immediately by the crowd. t It was not long thereafter until some one else began to whisper and again the crowd signaled to us to hush.

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"We were so impressed by their loyalty that we remained silent from then on during the procession, it was so uiet quiet that one could almost have heard a pin fall. We could not but respect them for their loyalty. Much the Americans could learn from them. We stood for three hours as the procession passed by. After it was over the lights were turned on and one of our crowd had imbibed too freely. Across the street there were two life size statues on a three story building and on looking up , the one who had been drinking saw the figures and said, "Dont jump, we will rescue you". However we were so impressed by the procession that we did not joke him about his utterances. We were thinking seriously of the outcome of this funeral and well we might have in view of the conseuences consequences !

"From Vienna we went to Brussels and from there twelve miles down to visit the battle of Watterloo, the monument was built by cutting down 10 twenty acres of earth and as there was no elevator we had to climb the steps to get to the top. On reaching the top we found a large bronze lion surmounting it. t It was a beautiful vision in the evening, I said to the guide when he showed us where Blutchter, Grutcher and Wellington met, that it was the prettiest thing the eye ever looked upon. W He said, "Yes, Yes," I said "the world is in peace, the whole world over". and we walked down the 365 steps to the panorama of the battle of Waterloo, and both agreed that it was a fine reproduction of the thing we had just viewed.

"There we met the Lord- Mayor of [London?]. Mrs Wood secured his signature telling him we would be in town soon. He assured us we would have a good time. Instead of going back to Brussels by train we went by taxi and on approaching the main street, we found the army, cavalry, and rapid fire guns drawn by dogs and following was the King and his children. We went across the street and made inquiry as to what it was for and they informed us that it was merely a review which was passing before the King. We had heard this so much until we believed it. But in a few minutes we could hear the guns firing at Liege. We could see that something terrible was happening without being told.



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"It was not long thereafter that we were told that we were in war. We were advised to return to our English speaking people and we returned to London, crossing that night through the hook of Holland. I was disgusted with the newspaper reports and happenings of the hour, so I inquired of a policeman as to the war and he replied, "Go home, and remember this, that after the war is over, the Englishman will have fought / fifteen minutes 11 longer than any one else". "We took his advice and attempted to return to our country but were detained thirteen days before we could secure passage, on account of there being such a rush of Americans trying to do the se same thing. And the demand for room on the steam-boats.

"We secured passage finally and came home with portholes covered and saing sailing like a stack of blakc cats in the darkness with no lights, fearing any minute that we might be sunk by a sub-marine. When we arrived in New York, three miles out, I saw tears of thankfulness for our safe return to our loved ones, more than I ever saw on any other occasion in my whole past life. Now this twenty-four years later, from somebody's indiscretion it begins to look as if we were going into the same maelstrom of war again.